

THE EARLY HISTORY
OF
The Church of England

“The Bulwark of the Reformation.”

A LECTURE BY

GEO. S. HOLMESTED,

Of Osgoode Hall, Barrister at Law, delivered before the
Toronto Church of England School Association.

PUBLISHED BY THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BOOK AND TRACT COMMITTEE OF
THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO.

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PREFACE

The following lecture was prepared at the request of the Toronto Church of England Sunday School Association before which it has been twice delivered. The Sunday School Committee of the Synod of Toronto being of the opinion that its publication may be useful I have bowed to their wishes, not because I feel that the lecture is entitled to any credit for originality, the facts on which it is based being mainly drawn from the works of more learned men—particularly the histories of Soames and Sharon Turner and others—but because the facts are presented in such a way as, I hope, may be helpful in disabusing the minds of those into whose hands it may come of certain popular errors concerning that part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of which the lecture treats.

G. S. H.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE CHURCH BEFORE AUGUSTINE.



HERE are not a few persons who, from superficial knowledge of the matter, are inclined to attribute the foundation of the Church of England to Augustine, A.D. 597; some, indeed, even venture to assert that it was founded at the Reformation. This, however, is a mistake. The establishment of the Christian Church in England took place long prior to the arrival of Augustine

It must be admitted, I think, that we have very little ground for stating, with any degree of certainty, by whom the Christian Church was first planted in the British Isles. Gildas, the oldest native historian, who wrote about 560, tells us that the "Sun of Righteousness "

arose in England about the time that Queen Boadicea was defeated by the Romans, which was about the year 162 or 163. He says that the father of Caractacus, who had been imprisoned at Rome, was liberated about this time, and brought back to England the knowledge of Christ, which he had acquired there. Some historians have been of opinion that to St. Paul himself the founding of the Christian Church in England is to be attributed. This opinion is based on these facts : (1) Clemens Romanus, the friend of St. Paul, in a well known passage in the epistle written by the Church of Rome to the Corinthians (circ. 69 or 70), speaking of St. Paul, says : " Having become a herald both in the east and in the west, he obtained the noble renown due to his faith, and having preached righteousness to the whole world, and having come to the *extremity of the west*, and having borne witness before rulers, he departed at length out of the world." By " the extremity of the west " or " utmost bounds of the west," as it is sometimes translated, it is supposed, though it cannot be confidently affirmed, that the British Isles were meant. (2) Justin Martyr (Phil.), A.D. 140, asserted that every country known to the Romans contained professors of the Christian faith. Britain was then in the possession of the Romans. (3)

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, about A.D. 179, asserted that Christianity had been spread to the utmost bounds of the earth by the apostles and their disciples.

4. At the end of the second century, *i.e.*, about 190, Tertullian, a learned presbyter, speaks of British districts inaccessible to the Roman arms having been subdued by Christ.

5. Eusebius, bishop and historian, who flourished 307-340, says that some of the apostles passed over the ocean to the British Isles, and St. Jerome (Pt.), 345-420, says that St. Paul himself imitated the Sun of Righteousness in going from one ocean to the other, and that his evangelical labors extended *to the western parts*.

6. Later, Theodoret, bishop and historian 393-457, asserts that St. Paul brought salvation to the isles of the ocean, and mentions Britons among converts to the apostles.

7. In the sixth century Venantius Fortunatus, and in the seventh century Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, speak of St. Paul's mission to Britain.

It will thus be seen that the evidence on which the founding of the Christian Church in England is attributed to St. Paul is of a somewhat fragmentary, and not of a very positive character. At the same time there is no reason to doubt that the early Christian writers

I have cited, though they wrote many years after St. Paul, were, nevertheless, giving the tradition current in their day. That there should be no more positive information is not very surprising, considering the persecutions which the ancient Church from time to time suffered, and that during these persecutions the Christian books and records were sought out and destroyed, to say nothing of the constant internal commotion which prevailed in the British Isles both before and after the Saxon invasion, which must have been equally fatal to the preservation of records of the early history of the Church in England.

During one of the persecutions which took place in the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 303, the first British martyr, of which we have any record, suffered. This was St. Alban.

A few years after this event we have a further item of interest in English Church history. In 314 three bishops of the ancient British Church, viz., the Bishops of York, London, and Lincoln (or Llandaff), also a priest and deacon were present at the Council of Bishops, held at Arles, in France. Other bishops of the British Church were present at the Councils of Nicæa, in Asia, in 325, Sardica, 347, and Ariminium in 359. We thus learn that at this early day the Church in England was fully organ-

ized; but the subsequent withdrawal of the Romans about the beginning of the fifth century and the invasion of the country by the heathen Saxons brought trouble and disaster upon the British Church—the Christians were driven into Wales and Cornwall, the rest of the island being in the hands of the heathen invaders.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

It may be well to pause here and to take a brief retrospect. The Church of Jesus Christ, founded in Jerusalem, was by the express commission of her Lord to be spread through all the world. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," said our risen Lord to His apostles. Wherever the Gospel was preached a branch of the Christian society called "the Church" was established for the perpetuation of the teaching of the Christian faith, and the administration of the Christian sacraments. Everywhere, too, this society was governed by a ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons: and though this Christian society, called "the Church," might acquire in different places local names, such as "the Church of Jerusalem," "the Church of Rome," "the Church of Gaul," "the Church of Alexandria," it was, nevertheless, but one society.

The emphatic words of all these various titles are "*The Church.*" The Church established in England was a part of this one great society ; and although there may be room for doubt as to the precise date at which, or the precise person by whom, the Christian Church was planted in England, yet there is no room at all to doubt that it was certainly established there, with the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, before the year 314.

THE ROMAN PERIOD.

It must be conceded that very little is known of the progress which the Church had made in England prior to the arrival of Augustine in 597. Up to the year 450, England had been, for over 400 years, occupied by the Romans, and had undoubtedly advanced considerably in civilization during that occupation. At the time it ceased, England and Wales were divided into five Roman provinces, and these provinces again had been divided into thirty-three *civitates*, or districts, each of which had a separate local government. These *civitates* probably resembled our counties, and the provinces the various provinces of this Dominion. In Gaul, where a similar division existed, there was in each *civitas* a bishop and in each province an archbishop ;

and it has been conjectured that a similar ecclesiastical organization existed in England and Wales. If this were so, then it is probable that at the time the Romans withdrew there may have been between thirty and forty bishops in England and Wales. But at the time the Romans departed there seems to have been no central authority, or bond of cohesion, in England, either in Church or State; the Church was very much in the condition of the Anglican part of the Church in Canada before its recent unification, and the State very much in the condition of Canada before Confederation. As a consequence of this want of unity of government, the country, on the departure of the Romans, immediately became the scene of internal dissensions, and it had, moreover, to contend with the invasions of the rude and barbarous Picts and Scots from the north. To resist these invaders the aid of the Saxons was sought, which in the end resulted in the Saxons becoming the masters of the country, and in the ancient inhabitants and their descendants who survived the conflict of battle being driven into Wales and Cornwall, where alone the British Church survived, when St. Augustine's mission arrived. Very few records remain of the ancient British Church. Mr. Haddan quotes historical notices of the existence of two Brit-

ish churches at Canterbury, two at Caerleon, one at Bangor Iscoed, near Chester, one at Glastonbury, one at Witheren, one at Evesham; and he also notes actual existing remains of others at Dover Castle, Richborough, Reculver, Lyminge, and Brixworth.

It would be a pleasant thing to know that, notwithstanding the misfortunes which befel the ancient British Church, it was, nevertheless, remarkable for its piety and devotion; but, unfortunately, the only picture we have is one that is anything but admirable. Gildas, the earliest native historian, who wrote about 560, said it had become a proverb that the Britons were neither brave in war nor faithful in peace; that, adverse to peace and truth, they were bold in crimes and falsehood; that evil was preferred to good, and impiety to religion. That those who were most cruel were (though not rightfully) anointed kings, and were soon justly destroyed by others fiercer than themselves. If anyone discovered gentler manners or superior virtues he became the more unpopular. Actions pleasing and displeasing to the Deity were held in equal estimation. And, (he says), it was not the laity only who were of this character, but that the clergy, who should have been an example to all, were addicted to intoxication, animosities and quarrels. He

accuses them of folly, impudence, deceit, robbery, avarice, profligacy, gluttony, and almost every other vice, "even," he adds, "that I may speak the truth, of infidelity." And yet, with all this abuse of the ecclesiastical order, he says he sometimes wishes that he may become a member of it before he dies. His abuse, however, is so vituperative that it is considered to be not altogether trustworthy. We must remember, too, that he wrote after the turmoil of one hundred years of constant wars had probably imbruted and depraved the people, and that his criticism, even if it were justified at the time he wrote, may afford no ground for supposing that in earlier times, when the country was in a state of peace and security under the Roman rule, either clergy or laity were so depraved.

THE COMING OF AUGUSTINE.

Although the Church in England had thus been cast down from its first estate it was not altogether destroyed; and when Augustine arrived, A.D. 597, he found still a faithful remnant. The story of Gregory the Great sending forth Augustine as a missionary to the pagan Anglo-Saxons is well known, and it is, therefore, unnecessary here to relate it. Suffice it to say that in A.D. 597 Augustine

arrived in England with his band of forty missionaries. England at that time was under the government of several different kings, but shortly before Augustine's arrival one of them—Ethelbert, the King of Kent—had acquired a certain precedence over all the other Anglo-Saxon potentates. It was to the court of this king, who had married a Christian princess (Bertha, the daughter of the King of the Franks), that Augustine came. This princess was not allowed to pass over into Kent until ample arrangements had been made for the free profession of her faith. She came, accordingly, attended by Luidhard, a Frankish Bishop; and for her accommodation an ancient British church, erected and dedicated to St. Martin, on the eastern side of Canterbury, was restored and again rendered suitable for Christian worship. Thus in about 560 a Christian congregation was formed in the principal seat of Anglo-Saxon power, thirty-six years before Augustine arrived with his band of missionaries. From what I have said, therefore, I think it will be generally admitted that nothing can be clearer than that Christianity was not first introduced into the British Isles by Augustine.

AUGUSTINE AND THE BRITISH BISHOPS.

Shortly after Augustine's arrival he had occasion to ask Pope Gregory's advice on various

subjects, among others, as to the course to be adopted by him in his intercourse with the bishops of Gaul and Britain. He was informed by Gregory that all of the British bishops were committed to him—the ignorant for instruction, the weak for persuasive confirmation, and the perverse for authority. It will be seen, therefore, that even in that early day the Pope claimed a sort of lordship over the native bishops. But while we must admit the Pope made the claim, it is also well to see how the native British bishops regarded it. There is, fortunately, an anecdote preserved in the pages of the Venerable Bede which sheds no little light on the point, especially when it is remembered that Bede, who records the story, was himself a devoted adherent of the Pope. The story is this: Some time after his arrival in England, Augustine, being desirous of consolidating and extending his authority, repaired to the confines of Wales and sought an interview with the native British bishops. The place of meeting was afterwards known as "Augustine's Oak." The influence of Ethelbert was used in bringing the parties together, and Augustine declared his principal object to be no other than to secure the co-operation of the British bishops in the great work of converting the Saxons: but he qualified

his application for their aid by insisting upon a complete uniformity in religious practices; for although the native British Christians appear to have held the same doctrines as Augustine, they differed in some respects in practice, notably in the time of keeping Easter. What this difference was is, perhaps, not absolutely certain. It is well known that a dispute arose very early in the Christian Church as to the proper day for keeping Easter. The Christians of Asia Minor, on the one hand, observed the day on which the Jews kept the Passover, in commemoration of the institution of the Lord's Supper; and three days afterwards, regardless of the day of the week, they celebrated Easter. The western Christians, on the other hand, always kept Easter on the first day of the week. Some writers suppose that this was the difference which prevailed between Augustine and the British bishops, and have hence argued that it indicates that the British Church had been founded by missionaries from the Eastern Church. But this particular dispute (known as the Quartodeciman controversy) appears to have been settled at the Council of Nice, 325, at which British bishops were present; and the better opinion seems to be that the difference between Augustine's method of keeping Easter and that of the British bishops was due to the

latter adhering to a mode of computing the day on which the festival should fall, known as the eighty-four years' cycle, a method which, in the middle of the sixth century, *i.e.*, forty years before Augustine's arrival in England, had been superseded in the Roman Church by another, founded upon more accurate astronomical calculations. But, whatever may have been the differences between the British bishops and Augustine, the native Christians adhered to their own practices, and refused to give them up. Finding argument useless, Augustine proposed to resort to a miracle as proof of his superior authority. A man, by birth an Angle, was produced, exhibiting marks of blindness. The Britons were invited to pray for his release from that calamity. Certain British bishops accepted the invitation, and, their prayers having proved ineffectual, Augustine then stepped forward and offered an earnest supplication, at the end of which the man appeared to have recovered his eyesight. Among an uncivilized people this test was regarded as conclusive, and Augustine's principles were approved by acclamation. The leading Britons, however, declined to accept them without the general consent of their countrymen, and requested a second conference, at which they might appear more numerous supported.

To this second conference came seven British bishops and various native divines of learning. On their way to the place of meeting they are said to have consulted a hermit, highly esteemed for prudence and holiness, who advised them, "If Augustine be a man of God, take his advice." They then asked how they were to know if he was a man of God. To this the hermit replied, "This is not difficult; our Lord enjoined 'Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' Now, manage 'to be at the place of meeting after the foreigner, and, if he shall rise at your approach, then you may think him to have learnt of Christ; if he should receive you sitting and show any haughtiness, then maintain your ancient usages." This proved an unfortunate test for Augustine, who, coming as he did from the then centre of civilization, not unnaturally, perhaps, regarded himself as the superior of the native clergy, and when he saw the Britons approach did not deign to rise from his seat. His demands on this occasion seem to have been confined to four things: One, that the Britons should keep Easter as he did; another, that they should baptize according to the Roman ritual; a third, that they should join him in converting the Angles to the faith; and a fourth, that they should acknowledge

him as their archbishop. But the Britons were disgusted with what they regarded as his want of courtesy and his assumption of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over them, and replied, "We shall agree to no one of your propositions; much less can we admit as our archbishop him who will not even rise to salute us."

PAPAL SUPREMACY UNKNOWN.

This little anecdote serves to show that the doctrine of Papal supremacy was not in those days accepted or acknowledged by those ancient British Christians. In fact, the British Church, whose orthodoxy, and the validity of the orders of whose bishops were unquestioned, so far from receiving the delegate of the Pope with open arms as their ecclesiastical superior, deliberately rejected his claim to exercise authority over them. From this incident I think we may also gather that the modern claim of the Popes to appoint all the bishops in Christendom had not been heard of in these early days; and so far from these ancient British bishops having been appointed by the Pope, the whole story of Augustine's mission leads to the conclusion that the Pope of that day not only had not appointed the bishops of the British Church, but until Augustine informed him of

the fact, was probably entirely ignorant even of their existence.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRITONS AND ROMANS.

It will be seen, too, that the questions touching which Augustine required conformity were not questions of faith, but matters of practice, such as the keeping of Easter and the ritual to be used in holy baptism. So far as questions of faith were concerned, that part of the Church represented by the British bishops and that part represented by Augustine were at one.

ROMISH CORRUPTIONS UNKNOWN.

Many are accustomed rashly to assume that the religion introduced by Augustine was the Roman Catholic religion as we see it at the present day; but a very little consideration will show that this is quite untrue, and that, on the contrary, the Christian religion, as taught and practised in Augustine's day, even by the Roman Church itself, was a great deal nearer the Christian faith as now taught and practised by the Church of England than it is to that taught and practised in the Church of Rome.

THE NICENE CREED THE STANDARD OF FAITH.

Dealing first with matters of faith, *i.e.*, those facts concerning our religion which it is neces-

sary that all Christians should "believe to their souls' health," we find that in Augustine's day the Creed which we call the Nicene Creed was the standard profession of faith, and was assumed to contain a complete summary of the Christian faith, and any Christian professing the faith as set forth in that Creed was considered in those days to believe all that was necessary for his salvation. That Creed is to-day the standard of faith in the Church of England, and she requires no one to believe, as necessary to his salvation, any other faith. In this respect she is in entire accord with the ancient Anglo-Saxon Church, and the ancient Roman Church, too. But how very different is the case in the Church of Rome to-day! It is true that she continues to accept the profession of faith contained in the Nicene Creed; but how many additions has she made to it?

ROMISH ADDITIONS TO THE FAITH.

According to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church to-day, Augustine and his band of missionaries must have been entirely ignorant of some of what present-day Romanists profess to consider most vital parts of the Christian religion. For example, take the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, whereby the Roman Church seeks to define in scholastic terms the manner

of our Lord's presence in the Holy Eucharist.* In Augustine's time no one was taught even in the Roman Church that this was an article of faith. Not a word on the subject is to be found in the Nicene Creed, and people were left to form their own opinions on this question. And it is obvious that men's belief or misbelief on the subject cannot affect the FACT, whatever it may be, one iota. And we may well believe that the benefits which our blessed Lord designs to give His followers in that holy ordinance do not depend in the least degree on our opinions as to how those benefits are conferred. Now this doctrine of transubstantiation was not broached till the latter part of the eighth century, and was not attempted to be made an article of faith even in the Roman Church until the Council of Lateran, A.D. 1215, or 618 years after Augustine landed in England.

MARIOLATRY.

The adoration paid by modern Romanists to the Blessed Virgin Mary was then utterly unknown. All the great writers of the Church

*This doctrine is founded on the *supposition* that there is some intangible thing called "substance" altogether distinct from those physical qualities such as size, taste, smell, and visible appearance, etc., by which we distinguish one thing from another. This *supposition* is absolutely incapable of proof, and even as a philosophical theory has been abandoned by all modern scientists.

prior to Pope Gregory, by whom Augustine was sent, are either entirely silent on the subject, or, where they do speak, it is only in condemnation of the practice. And certainly no dogma concerning her conception without sin was required to be believed by any Christian anywhere in Augustine's time, or, indeed, had ever then been heard of. Even so late as the time of St. Bernard (1091-1153), when this doctrine first came to be mooted, that eminent doctor of the Church denounced it as "the nonsense of a few idiots; a new-fangled absurdity set up against the order of the Church; the mother of temerity, the sister of superstition, the daughter of levity, of which the Church's ritual knows nothing, which reason does not sustain, and which finds no warrant from primitive tradition." And yet a doctrine thus assailed by one whom Roman theologians are accustomed to style "the last of the Fathers," and whom all Romanists revere as a canonized saint, was, by the late Pope Pius IX., so late as the year 1854, or 1,260 years after Augustine's arrival in England, declared to be an article of the Christian faith.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.

In Augustine's time no Christian anywhere was required to profess any belief in the infallibility of the Pope. Indeed, so late as the year

1823, the whole of the Romish hierarchy in Ireland published a solemn declaration, in which they declared on oath their belief that it was not an article of the Catholic faith, neither are they thereby required to believe that the Pope is infallible. So sure were even other modern Romanists of the correctness of this opinion that in a controversial catechism, published for the instruction of Roman Catholics, and used for many years by Roman Catholics, and which was expressly licensed and approved by Archbishop Hughes of New York, and which also received the formal approbation of four Roman Catholic Bishops in Scotland so late as 1846 and 1853, we find the following question and answer :

“Q. Must not Catholics believe the Pope himself to be infallible ?

“A. *This is a Protestant invention ; it is no article of the Catholic faith* No decision of his can bind on pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body, that is, by the bishops of the Church.”

And yet this so-called “Protestant invention” on the 18th February, 1870, was by Pope Pius IX. also attempted to be added as an article of the Christian faith, 1,273 years after Augustine.

PURGATORY.

Then, again, the doctrine of purgatory, as now taught by the Church of Rome, was unknown to Augustine, and certainly could not have been an article of faith in his time, because it was not until the Council of Florence, 1439, or 847 years after Augustine, that even the existence of a purgatory was asserted to be an article of faith. And it was not until the Council of Trent, 1563, or 1,000 years after Augustine, that the modern Romish doctrine as to the efficacy of the Holy Communion as a propitiatory sacrifice for the relief of souls from purgatory was attempted to be made an article of the faith.

INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

The invocation of saints was for a long time no more than a floating opinion. So late as 1150 Peter Lombard, an eminent theologian, when treating of this doctrine, only ventures to assert that, "It is *not incredible* that the souls of the saints . . . understand what is passing in the outer world." And Veron, an eminent Jesuit divine, writing so late as the seventeenth century, denied it to be an article of faith, though a probable opinion.

OTHER INNOVATIONS.

The veneration of relics, though no doubt practised in Augustine's time, was not then a

matter of faith ; neither was the acknowledgment of the Roman Church as the mother and mistress of all churches. Even in the Roman Church itself these additions were not attempted to be made to the faith until the sixteenth century. Prior to that they were opinions about which men might differ, even in the Roman Church.

The modern Roman doctrine concerning "The Church" is thus expressed in the Creed of Pius V., which embodies the novel dogmas added by the Council of Trent :

"I acknowledge the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches ; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ."

It is true that this Creed seems to admit that there are *other churches* besides the Roman Church, otherwise there would be no sense in declaring the Roman Church to be "the mother and mistress of all churches." Modern Romanists, however, seem to have got beyond the statements of this Creed, since they virtually assert that the only true Church is the Roman Church : and, according to modern Romanists, no one can be truly a Catholic unless he is also a *Roman Catholic*.

If it were, indeed, true that the Roman Church is "the mother and mistress of all churches,"—(a statement, however, which is plainly historically false, as, if any Church is entitled to that designation, it must be the Church of Jerusalem, from whence St. Peter and all the other apostles came), it must be confessed that so far as the ancient British Church was concerned, she proved little better than a very bad step-mother. For at St. Augustine's advent the native British Church had been so long left to its fate by this so-called "mother" that she had apparently forgotten she had such a child.

But in the pages of Bede we plainly see that in Augustine's time the existence and autonomy of the different national churches into which the Catholic Church was divided was a recognized fact, and the theory that the Roman Church was the only true church had no existence. Among the questions addressed by Augustine to Pope Gregory was this :

"When there is but one faith, why are there different customs of churches, and why is one custom of masses observed in the Holy Roman Church, and another in the Church of Gaul?"

To which Gregory made this answer :

"You, my brother, know the custom of the Roman Church, in which you remember that

you yourself were brought up. But my sentence is that whether in the *Roman*, or the *Gallican*, or in *any church*, you have found anything which may be more pleasing to Omnipotent God, you carefully select and with special instruction impart to the *Church of the English*, which as yet is new to the faith, what things you have been able to collect from many churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. From *each individual church*, therefore, choose the things which are pious, which are religious, which are right, and deposit these things, when you have collected them, as it were, into a bundle, in the minds of the English for their use."

This is very excellent advice, and entirely accordant with the teaching of the Anglican Church to-day, but we can hardly imagine that a modern Roman Pope would nowadays give such sensible advice to any missionary bishop.

IMAGES.

With regard to the use of images, the purity of the ancient British Church is well attested by the fact that when, in 787 (or 190 years after Augustine), the second Council of Nice foolishly sanctioned the veneration of images, a Council of the Bishops of the Anglo-Saxon Church was

held, at which the decree was unanimously condemned. But of this I shall have something more to say further on.

CELEBACY OF THE CLERGY.

Turning now to some of the peculiar practices adopted by the Church of Rome, *e.g.*, the enforcement of celibacy on the clergy, and the denial of the Eucharistic cup to the laity, we find that the latter grievous error had no place in the Anglo-Saxon Church, nor even in the Roman Church, until the beginning of the thirteenth century; and whatever theories may have been prevalent as to the advisability of priestly celibacy, as a matter of practice, it was by no means universally adopted in the Anglo-Saxon Church. While in so many respects the ancient Church of England differed in its faith and practice from that of modern Romanism, still it cannot be denied that some of those opinions and practices which ultimately ripened into the dogmatic decrees by which the Roman Church has attempted from time to time to add to the Catholic faith as set forth in the Nicene Creed, by degrees gained a foothold in her bosom, and were widely adopted, until the great upheaval of the Reformation, when the Church of England set herself carefully to scrutinize every doctrine and every practice, and while

scrupulously retaining those which were really primitive she fearlessly cast from her those which were false or unwarranted, or which tended to superstition, and by this means she recovered not only her pristine purity of faith, but even more than her pristine purity in practice.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE CHURCH.

Augustine, as we have seen, failed to secure the union and co-operation of the British bishops, but what he failed to accomplish was ultimately effected under one of his successors in the See of Canterbury.

Through the influence of Oswy, King of Northumbria, those Roman usages which, we have seen, differed from those of the ancient British bishops, were ultimately adopted by the successors of the latter, and under Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, the British and Roman parties became united, and thus the Anglo-Saxon Church became consolidated (*circ.* 669); it is also well to remember that it was not until the reign of Egbert, about 160 years afterwards, that the State of England became united under one king, because it is sometimes foolishly said that the Church in England owes its origin to the State.

OUR DEBT TO ROME.

While we cannot yield to Rome the merit of founding the Christian Church in the British Isles, we may nevertheless gratefully acknowledge that in an age of darkness and barbarism it afforded, through Augustine's mission, material aid to the native church and helped in an important measure to hasten the conversion of many of our forefathers to the Christian faith.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH.

The Anglo-Saxon Church, after its consolidation under Theodore, was adorned by many noble sons, of whom we, their fellow-churchmen, may well be proud. Theodore himself, a fellow-countryman of S. Paul, though not coming to England until 66 years old, lived 22 years in the country as Archbishop of Canterbury, and he may be justly ranked as one of the ablest prelates that ever filled that important See. Though he did much to establish the authority of the Roman See over the English Church—for which we may not think him particularly praiseworthy—he also gave stability to the religious establishment of England, both in regard to its organization, doctrine and discipline, and he also wisely provided for the intellectual growth of the nation by his liberal and enlightened patronage of learning.

THE VENERABLE BEDE.

In 673 was born that Christian scholar and priest I have already mentioned, whose name will always be memorable in the annals of the Church—the Venerable Bede. From the early age of seven years he was an inmate of a monastery, his earliest patron and instructor being Benedict Biscop, the abbot and founder of the monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth. After passing his childhood and youth under circumstances most favorable to his advancement in learning, he was at 19 ordained deacon and at 30 priest. He was of a studious turn of mind, and his industry was indefatigable. Scripture was his favorite study, but he seems to have eagerly explored every branch of learning within his reach, and he became the great school master of the Anglo-Saxon race. In addition to his "Ecclesiastical History," which has come down to us, and which is an invaluable record of interesting events compiled from ancient monuments, traditions, and personal knowledge, he translated into Anglo-Saxon the most necessary formularies of the Church, and at his dying day was engaged in a translation into Saxon of the Gospel of St. John.

Alcuin, another learned and pious Anglo-

Saxon, became the trusted counsellor of the Emperor Charlemagne, and an illustrious teacher not only of his own countrymen, but of the people of France, too.

THE PROTEST AGAINST IMAGES.

To Alcuin it is supposed that we are indebted for an important work known as the *Caroline Books*, which came to be promulgated under the following circumstances: In 792 Pope Adrian transmitted to Charlemagne the decrees of the second council of Nice, and he in turn forwarded them to Offa, King of the Mercians, who laid them before the Anglo-Saxon clergy. These decrees sanctioned the adoration of images of Christ and the saints. The Anglo-Saxon Church had looked for some time past to the Pope with deference and respect. He was without doubt the most powerful and important bishop in western Christendom. But this demand upon their obedience was one to which they could not yield. They were, however, in the dilemma that the Pope himself had adopted this decree, which seemed to them subversive of the first principles of their religion. The English ecclesiastics, therefore, affected to ignore the Pope's connection with the second council of Nice, treated that assembly as merely

oriental, and denounced its decrees as a grievous disgrace to Christianity, "*the worship of images being (as they affirmed) that which God's Church altogether execrates.*" This was, however, really nothing less than an open defiance of papal authority, and the Anglo Saxon Church sought an advocate whose pen might give weight to its opinions. For this task Alcuin, the most illustrious of contemporary scholars, was selected, and his execution of it excited unqualified admiration. The work which he produced is not preserved to us under his own name, but it is supposed to be none other than the celebrated Caroline Books.

These books purport to be an authentic declaration of the Emperor Charlemagne's opinion and policy upon the worship of images, and they are amongst the most valuable relics which time has spared of the ecclesiastical literature of that age. In them all worship of images is denounced as an insidious relic of paganism, and image worship as a Satanic device by which triumphs gained in the field are likely to be lost within the city walls. It is also charged with novelty, and all attempts to shelter it under the Mosaical commands to make the sculptured cherubim and brazen serpent are exposed. No use whatever is conceded to images or pictures in churches beyond mere

ornament and commemoration: and the lighting of tapers and the burning of incense before them, and paying acts of veneration towards them, are all condemned as unauthorized and superstitious. It is alleged by some Roman Catholics that this execration of image-worship in England was due to a mistranslation of a sentence uttered by Constantine, bishop of Cyprus, which made him say that he adored images as he did the Trinity. But although it appears by the Caroline Books that he was so understood by the writer, and though this no doubt tended to increase the indignation with which the decrees in question were received, yet it is evident from the Caroline Books that this was not alone the cause of the attitude of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The truth being that in Britain, Gaul, and Germany, pictures and images were then looked upon merely as church furniture, no more to be worshipped than a door or a bench. Unhappily the resolute stand at first taken by our forefathers against the introduction of the use of images was not maintained by succeeding generations, who not only basely yielded to the lead of Rome in this respect, but by the grossly idolatrous and superstitious practices with which they surrounded the use of images as objects of worship, furnished a warning for all further generations not again to follow in their steps.

WINIFRED.

Winifred was another illustrious Saxon, who went forth from the Anglo-Saxon Church as a missionary to the continental pagans, and subsequently under the name of Boniface became Bishop of the Germans.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

After the death of Alcuin, England passed through many years of turmoil and confusion, consequent upon Danish incursions, and religion and learning suffered, until they once again revived under the celebrated Saxon king, *Alfred the Great*, who proved himself to be both a warrior and a scholar. He conceived the noble desire of founding a vernacular literature, for up to his day Latin alone was the language of the learned. In order to enlighten his countrymen on the Church annals of their country, he translated into Saxon Bede's Ecclesiastical History. He also translated the geography of Orosius, and gave his people a free version of Boethius on the Consolation of Philosophy, a work then highly valued, and besides and best of all, he translated into Saxon many parts of Holy Scripture, and was engaged in a translation of the Psalms when death overtook him.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY.

It would be impossible in the time at my disposal to follow the history of the Church of England further at the present time, but before I conclude it may be useful to say a few words on the lessons to be drawn from the facts which we have been discussing.

In the first place we learn that England was not indebted to Rome for the introduction of Christianity, on the contrary Christianity was planted in England at least 300 years (and probably for a still longer period) before Augustine's arrival. We also learn that the Christian Church originally established in England, and which Augustine found there, was not in any way subject to the Pope and did not acknowledge his supremacy. Although it is true that by its subsequent amalgamation with the mission of Augustine it was ultimately brought for a time, into subjection to the See of Rome.

We may learn, too, that the Church of England instead of being founded by the State (as some people ignorantly assume), had been united and consolidated long before the State which is assumed to have founded it. Because 160 years before England had ceased to be a collection of petty principalities and became united under one sovereign, the Church of England

had been united and consolidated under Theodore Archbishop of Canterbury.

We may also learn that the oft-repeated boast of the Church of Rome that she never changes, is entirely contrary to the facts of history. So far from her faith to-day being what it was in the early days of the Church of England, it is safe to say that Augustine or even Pope Gregory himself would not recognize it as it is now taught in the Church of Rome. They would have to learn the doctrine of transubstantiation, which in their day had never been heard of. They would have to learn that it is lawful to worship and venerate the images of Christ and the Saints; and to deny the cup to the laity in the Holy Communion; that the Roman Church is the mother and mistress of all churches; and that the Pope is Universal Bishop (a title which Pope Gregory, who sent Augustine, himself reprobated). They would have to learn too that the Pope of Rome is infallible, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without sin; and that it is lawful to pray to her in language similar to that addressed to God Himself. They would also have to learn that there is a purgatory from which souls may be released by the offering of the Eucharist. May we not well conclude, that if all these doctrines were not essential in those early days, they cannot possibly be so now?

NO NEW CHURCH FOUNDED AT THE REFORMATION.

It must be admitted that after Augustine's time many of these doctrines were taught and received in the Church of England, and from this fact, some people assume that the Church of England became a part of the Church of Rome. This, however, is a mistake. The Church in England was designated by Pope Gregory himself, as we have seen, as "the Church of the English"; and that part of the Church planted in England always remained and was always called "THE CHURCH of England." We do not read in Magna Charta, for instance, that "the Church of Rome shall have all her whole rights and liberties," what we do read is that "the *Church of England* shall have all *her* whole rights and liberties," and the Church of England is so styled in many other statutes passed long prior to the Reformation.

The notion that because prior to the Reformation the Church of England had adopted many Romish errors therefore she was a part of the Church of Rome arises from a confusion of ideas.

Let us suppose that the Lieut. Governor of Quebec were to arrogate to himself the functions of the Governor General of the Dominion and that he should procure the Legislature of

Quebec to pass laws for the government of the whole Dominion, and suppose this Province of Ontario were for a time to submit to this usurpation of authority and receive and obey the laws which the Quebec Legislature had thus wrongfully assumed to pass, would this Province thereby become a part of Quebec? By no means. And if some enlightened statesman should arise and show that this obedience we had been paying to the Lieut. Governor of Quebec was all wrong and that the laws his assembly had passed were really not binding on us, should we be making or setting up a new Province if we were to refuse any longer to acknowledge the usurped authority?

And yet that is very like what happened with the Church of England and the Church of Rome. Just as Ontario and Quebec are parts of one Dominion and bound by its laws, so are the Church of England and the Church of Rome parts of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and bound by its laws; and when the Pope assumed to exercise authority over the Church of England and to pass laws for the government of the whole Church, it was like the Governor of Quebec assuming to govern Ontario and to pass laws for the government of the whole Dominion—both of which proceedings are contrary, the one to the original constitution

of the Church, and the other to the constitution of the Dominion.

While we may admit, therefore, that the Church of England was led, through a variety of circumstances which it is impossible here to trace, to submit for a time to the usurped authority of the Pope, and to adopt many erroneous opinions and practices before the Reformation, we cannot for a moment admit that thereby the Church of England became a part of the Church of Rome.

Remembering this, we see how absurd and contrary to the fact it is to say, as some people do, that at the Reformation the Church of Rome was abolished in England, and the Church of England set up in its place.

If this were the true version of what took place, we might expect to find some statute transferring all the property of the Church that is said to have been abolished, to the Church said to have been set up in its place. But if you look from now to doomsday you will never find any such statute. What you will find as the key note of the Reformation is a statute forbidding appeals to the Pope in matters ecclesiastical and preventing him from any longer exercising authority in the Church of England. Relieved from this usurped authority and restored to her ancient independence of

Rome, the Church of England set herself to remove the errors in doctrine and in practice, which had been developed in ages of ignorance, and which obscured the true faith. But her continuous historic existence has ever been maintained, by a due succession of bishops who have handed on their authority from age to age, and she is to-day the same ancient historic Catholic and Apostolic Church which has ever guided and controlled the spiritual life of the English people from the time they first embraced the Christian religion.

But while we have just ground for glorying in the antiquity and history of that beloved part of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church with which it is our happiness and privilege to be in communion, we must ever remember that the Church in every age is very much what the people of that age make it. The present age alone we can call our own. It is in vain for a man to boast of the deeds of his ancestors unless he shows by his own life that he emulates their example, so also it is vain for us to boast and glory in the past of the Church of England if we do not also, each in his station and calling do his utmost both by precept and example to make that part of the Church in which our lot is cast in this day a praise and glory in the earth.

While studying the history of the Church of England during the period we have been considering, we have found that many Romish errors which were subsequently developed had then no existence. Truth compels me also to say some Protestant novelties were equally conspicuous by their absence. In those days if you had searched England, Scotland and Ireland, you would have failed to find any such Christians as Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, or Plymouth Brethren, and if you had told those old British Bishops, about whom we have been talking, that Episcopacy was all a mistake, that no ministry at all was necessary, or that priests had the power of ordination; that it was improper to baptize infants; and that each congregation of Christians was independent of every other congregation--you would have made them open their eyes with astonishment. How could they be expected to know these things, seeing that these notions were not invented until 1000 years and more after they had died?

While it is no part of our duty to judge our neighbours who adopt these novelties and make them a ground of separation from us, we may nevertheless deplore the fact that they are separated from us on these, or any other grounds. The Church of England is perhaps the only

part of the Catholic Church that teaches her people systematically to pray for a restoration of the unity, which has unhappily been lost. Let us not be found wanting in readiness (if in the Providence of God an opportunity offers) to do our part to heal the breach so far as this may be done without a sacrifice of those fundamental principles which we have inherited from the primitive and undivided Church, and which cannot be surrendered, because we hold them as a sacred trust to be handed on inviolate as we have received them. Those fundamental principles may, I think, be summed up in their chronological order : 1st, The ancient Apostolic ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons ; 2nd, The Sacraments which Christ Himself ordained ; 3rd, The Holy Scriptures, and 4th, The Catholic Creeds of the undivided Church.

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